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## PROBLEMS OF THE DAY.

### STATE REGISTRATION OF NURSES AND THE NATIONAL PARTY.

Mrs. Bedford Fenwick brought the question of State Registration of Trained Nurses as one of the Problems of the Day, before the weekly meeting of the National Party, at 64, Victoria Street, S.W., on Saturday last, at which Miss Graham Hope presided, when she gave a spirited historical survey of the whole movement for the past thirty years, which apparently greatly interested those present.

Mrs. Fenwick said State Registration was a far-reaching question of social reform, and was one of primary importance as a means to a high standard of National Health, which could not be attained without making compulsory efficient educational and just economic standards for trained nurses. It was also a business proposition for the State, the neglect of which for the past thirty years proved that those responsible for the well-being of the State had failed lamentably in their duty to the people. The sad history of the Nurses' Registration movement was on a par with the almost criminal neglect with which other creative and progressive movements had been treated by the professional politicians of the two great Parties, which had been either too ignorant or too cowardly to prevent the German conspiracy of theft and murder deluging the world with blood—a lack of patriotism which had taught many women the lesson of their lives, and which the National Party was out to rectify.

Mrs. Fenwick then spoke of the evolution of the care of the National Health as a business proposition, and quoted from a Statement sent by her to the Chancellor of the Exchequer (the present Premier) in the year 1911, when pleading that a preventive and curative Nursing Department should be provided for in the so-called National Health Bill (National Insurance Bill), in which she claimed that for the maintenance of a high standard of health in civilised communities the human atom must be encircled by sanitary science, preventive hygiene, pre-

ventive and curative medicine, and preventive and curative nursing, all one and indivisible, making the perfect circle, a trinity of effort, in which each has its own indispensable function, in preserving wholeness and soundness of body and mind. It was because no such far-seeing statesmanship went to the making of the National Insurance Act that a National Health Ministry was being demanded to-day. Trained nursing was not even mentioned in the Bill. "We hoped," said Mrs. Fenwick, "to rectify this omission by sweet reasonableness. We asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer to receive a deputation of trained nurses; we were refused a hearing. We drew up explanatory memos. and petitions; we proffered amendments to the Bill. The former, no doubt, fluttered into the waste-paper basket; the latter were all 'kangarooed' in the House of Commons. We were told that trained nurses as such did not exist, and what was non-existent could not, of course, be included in an Act of Parliament. This was and is quite true: a trained nurse has never been defined; anyone can call themselves a nurse—and attempt to perform her responsible duties. Also it was intimated to us: 'There is no money to pay for your services, so run away and be quiet.'

"We did not feel justified in acting on that advice, because we knew that unless the best skilled nursing was available for insured persons as an addition to medical benefit, the scheme for medical benefit was going to break down just where it would be of the greatest comfort to the sick, and of most economic value to the nation. You cannot remove one-third of a circle and keep its charm inviolable. A National Health Act should re-act as a Prevention of Sickness Act, and it should demand and establish a high standard of national health. A primary necessity in the prevention of mental and physical debility is sound instruction of the people in the laws of health, and just here comes in your highly trained nurse as a force potent for good. She comes into intimate personal touch with people of all classes. She is your health missionary and

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